

MODERATE DECISION

Of the point of

SUCCESSION

*Humbly Proposed to the Consideration of
Parliament.*

THE Case to be put is this: A Nation is Protestant in the main Body of it: He that is like to succeed in the Throne is a Roman Catholic. What shall be done in such an Affair? The Case does belong to the Divines, and to the Lawyers, though it be the Parliament alone must determine it: Nay, the matter indeed is what every body think themselves engaged in; and every body speak their minds of. There is no Coffee-house, and few private Houses, but their Table-talk is of these things. I see no reason therefore why I may not speak my mind also, so long as I do it of my self, and with this signification, that no others (how much soever else concern'd with me) have any hand in the publication of it. For I am perswaded, that if the Parliament shall take the liberty (every one of them, as English-men and Protestants) to speak the same things in the House, as we do abroad, they would be less afraid of one another.

thier, and more secure in their Counsels, (whatsoever they take) in providing for the safety of the Kingdom, and Religion.

It is decreed in the Council of *Lateran*, That all Princes shall Exterminate the *Hereticks* out of their Dominions, upon pain of Deposition, Excommunication, and Damnation. The *Papists* believe the Doctrines of their Church to be infallible, and what is decreed by a Pope and Universal Council is unquestionably received as a Doctrine of their Church; and consequently if any thing be decreed to be done by any man, upon pain of Damnation, they must do it first or last, by such means as they can, if they intend to be saved. Where a person then is a *Roman Catholick*, and true to his Religion, he cannot enter upon the Throne of a Protestant Kingdom, but he must resolve to Exterminate his Subjects. To enter so, is to enter *Assili-um*, with the mind of an Enemy, as *Hofis*, & *Hofis Publicus*. But to be *Hofis* and *Rex*, a King and an Enemy; a Shepherd and Father of his People, and one that comes to make havock of them; To destroy, and to rule or govern, are things utterly incompatible.

The resolution of this Case, therefore in point of Reason and Conscience is open. That such a person must on necessity either renounce that Religion, or else he must relinquish the Government, and be content that the next rightful Heirs or Successors do possess it.

Upon these terms now, if there be any person so pious and devout as not daring to hazard the Salvation of his Soul, he does purpose if he be King (whatsoever comes of it, seeing he must) to make his people turn

turn *Papists*, or execute that Decree of the Church upon them: And if he be also so generous and brave, as that rather than do such a thing as to persecute his Country, and make the Nation miserable, he will freely decline a Crown to avoid that intolerable incumbent duty; What is there under the whole cope of Heaven so worthy to canonize a mans name to posterity as such an action? And what can be said why the Representative of a Nation might not make an humble, and yet confident Address to such a one, to offer him Reasons for his voluntary condescension to such a Request made to him, when a forced deposition by an Act of Parliament, before any such trial be attempted, may look exceeding hard, and also be ill taken? Neither were it a thing less eligible, as it must certainly be more happy, to remain a Duke and Father of the next Successor taking the Throne and reigning in quiet, than to be himself a King, and reign only in Blood, and with the Confusion of his Subjects.

And to render this matter yet more glorious and necessary to such a Royal person, he shall moreover by doing thus, provide security for the sacred life of a Sovereign, and a Brother, which, so long as a *Papist* is sure to succeed, must be still exposed to Plots and Treason, Poyson and Assassination: For there cannot be wanting a *Clement*, a *Ravilliack*, or some such *Villain*, as is capable to be persuaded, that by a feat so highly advantageous to their Religion, he shall both expiate the sin, and merit life eternal.

As for the Case in point of Law I undertake not; Only it appears to me (I must confess) from the Statute of the thirteenth of the Queen, that though this Government be Hereditary, it is so Hereditary as the

Laws or Statutes of Parliament do bind the descent of the Crown. And if it be as it appears, I have nothing else to say, but to desire of God to give to those who are now after so long expectation Assembled, the moderation and understanding of the *Heads of the Children of Issachar*, that they may know at such a time as this what Israel hath to do.

And if there be no Act passed by them concerning these matters, I must for the discharge of my Conscience superad thus much further, that although on the part of the Sovereign be that is a *Papist* cannot take the Throne where the Body of the people are Protestant, according to *right reason* and *Conscience*, as might be made to appear further, if what is said were not sufficient already: yet on the part of the Subject, let the Crown fall to any person, whatsoever he be, whether *Papist* or *Protestant*, if he have right to it according to the present Law in force, and the Constitution of the Nation, there is no good Protestant, or no Subject that fears God, can rise up in Arms against him upon the account of Religion. *Evangelium* (say our first Reformers) *non abolet politica.*

We are taught this by the *Primitiva Christians* all along during the Reign of the Heathen; who, whatsoever their number was, in their Cities, Castles, Armies (as some of the Fathers tell us) were ready to lay down their lives, and submit to a Decimation upon a Decimation, rather than they would draw their Swords upon the Emperour, or sin against Heaven. This we are taught more effectually by the Apostle, and are therefore never to be untought it. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God: the Powers that be, are ordain'd of God. Whosoever* there.

Therefore, resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation. I speak it (I must acknowledge) not only in regard to the prevention of Blood and Mischief (if Providence should call us under such a Tryal), but in regard to the Parliament: that they may look the more about them, and consider, they have a season. And more particularly that they may beware of running into this Errour (upon which two Parliaments have split already) the neglect of doing what may be done, through an over-reaching haste toward what they would have done (I mean in this point of Succession), and which will be better done (if it be at all done), to be *left* done.

As for the Plot, I fear not likewise to say thus much, That whosoever he be that be found to have design'd the Introduction of *Popery* by the Murder of the King, or a Massacre of the People. I declare in the behalf of the publick, he ought to dye. Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey's innocent Blood cries for Justice on such men: But if any person has had any hand in this Plot, no farther than to give his consent and assistance to the bringing in that Religion upon us by an Universal Liberty of Conscience, and no otherwise: which is consequently by Teaching and Argument, in a gentle progress of Time, and Perswasion, not by Violence and Blood, or any hurt to the Subject in their Lives and Estates, or by conversion of the Civil Government from Regal to Despotical, as by many is imagined: and, being now convinced of the detestable Villany and Hellish Devotion of others, who were precipitating the Design with *Regicide* and a *Common slaughter*, shall be willing hereupon to make some remonstrance for the purging himself and

his

his Conscience, and the testifying his abhorrence of proceeding further in such an Enterprize, I must declare with the like open freedom, that such a one ought to be Heard. And who can tell what might be the issue of such a piece of Ingenuity as this only? To say, *Look you, Sirs, Thus it has been; I confess it, and thus these are the Consequents; I see the evil, it shall be so no more.*

In the name of God, let us but have a Gentleman-like Repentance, that is *right English*, without reserve, and here is the way to the first, and consequently the best and most desirable reconciliation that can be in the Case; to the most easie coming off from what is past, and for the giving the most Heroical Satisfaction that can be given to the Land.

By this means shall such a person engage himself to the strongest retraction of all that is ill, for recovery of his trust with the Nation: and the Plot be so laid open, that the Parliament may proceed to the application of a perfect Remedy. By this means shall the *innocent* be put into safety, and the *guilty* (so far as any is guilty) into his right course of obtaining the forgiveness of his Country. For such is the nature of the *English* spirit, that when it generously prosecutes the obstinate Offender with vehemence and courage, as soon as he does but relent or comes to suffer, it is presently apt to commiseration, and to think the best of him.

I shall conclude with a Text of Scripture. If this great man shall neither come off from his way (which were to be first wished), nor to a Compromise and Renunciation (which were to be sought *next*); nor the Parliament to some Act for *Constraint*, to make him chuse the one or the other (which is to be *last attempted*);

or for *Refrain*, by ordering the Militia, and other things
 so, as it shall be equivalent, or as politically good for
 England, as if he did either. I must deliver my own Soul
 as a Watchman, and as an *English* man protest before God,
 that I can see the appearance of nothing but Evil, than
 is, Destruction, Milery, and Trouble, coming upon
 the three Kingdoms. Now it came to pass, after this, that
 Amaziah brought the Gods of the Chaldeans, and
 set them up, and bowed before them. *For the Lord God of
 Israel was smitten, and he sent to him a Prophet, And he came
 to pass as the Prophet was talking with him, he said, O
 thou made of the Kings Council, Forbear, why shouldst
 thou be smitten? Then the Prophet answered, I know
 what God hath determined to do by thee, because
 thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my voice.*

as the subject judges only of what is seen, the Prince
 he, and not of what is secret, the Prince hears, the Prince
 may be bound in Conscience to obey, and yet the Sub-
 ject have no Warrant (if he will not) to resist. Whether
 the Prince (I say) be Right in regard to his Opinion, it is
 God alone and himself know: Whether he be Wrong, the
 rightful Prince or not, all know. The Prince is bound to
 go by his Conscience, the People are bound to go by
 theirs in the Determining. **I. N. I. F.**

This is a Paragraph at last.

If ever those that fear God, and seek the good of their
 Country, had need of moderation they now need it; for
 no violent thing can hold, whatsoever any think or shall
 do to the contrary.
 The Author.

1641

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This Paragraph is to be supplied, p. 4. l. 22.

My Reason for this decision is, because the Prince himself knows what is in his own heart, whether he be bound in his Conscience so far by his Religion, or no; and if he be, he must know also that this is inconsistent with the Rule over such a People. Government is for the Weal of the Publick, and though the Publick might be served by the rooting out Dissenters where they are but a *few*, it can not be served by the doing so where they are *many*, and the *most* are such. On the contrary, the People know not the Princes heart; he may be a Papist otherwise, and not of that Conscience; he may receive the Doctrines of *Trent*, and renounce the Decree of *Lateran*; or he may interpret it, that it binds not, when it *cannot* be executed, as where the *greater* number are Protestants, and when in prudence it *ought* not, as where there are but *many* so. So long then as the Subject judges only of what is *open*, the Princes *Title*, and not of what is *secret*, the Princes *Heart*, the Prince may be bound in Conscience to *lay down*, and yet the Subject have no Warrant (if he will not) to *resist*. Whether the Prince (I say) be *Hypocrite* in regard to his Opinion, it is God alone and himself know: Whether he be *Heresy*, the rightful Prince or not, all know. The *Prince* is bound to go by his Conscience, the People are bound to go by theirs in the Determination.

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F I N I S.

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